

Segment **H27: Birkenstocks and Beemers**

Upper middle-class established couples living leisure lifestyles in small towns and cities

Resource: Mosaic by Experian.

Religious Experience in a Nutshell

Religious Perspective: *Faithfulness means being brand loyal and cost conscious*

Common Spiritual Issues: *Feeling lost and neglected, anxieties over estrangement and displacement*

Potential Influence

Lifestyle Compatibility	Family Group H Middle Class Melting Pot	Frequent Neighbors
C11 Aging of Aquarius	H26 Progressive Potpourri	E21 Unspoiled Splendor
E20 No Place Like Home	H27 Birkenstocks and Beemers	I32 Steadfast Conventionalists
J34 Aging in Place	H28 Everyday Moderates	J36 Settled and Sensible
L41 Booming and Consuming	H29 Destination Recreation	K40 Bohemian Groove

General Comments

Spirituality can be very important to *Birkenstocks and Beemers*, and is often associated with nature, health, and personal relationships. They have moved to the country or small towns where the pace of life is slower and there is more time to reflect and enjoy life. Religion, however, is less important, and these well-educated adults can tolerate a great deal of ambiguity about doctrine. They may choose happiness over duty, and if they go to church they will gravitate to smaller, intimate congregations that provide a great sense of belonging without lots of expectations.

These churches are often mainstream Protestant or small Catholic parishes that have high aesthetic standards for sacred space and sacred liturgy, inclusive and broadly liberal perspectives, and low financial challenges. Church is a one-day-a-week commitment, although some will be willing to serve on boards and other committees. These churches tend to protect harmony at almost any cost, and strive to avoid conflict over hot button social issues. They concentrate on fellowship, mutual support, and care giving. They raise money for charitable causes, especially those related to funding the arts, protecting the environment, and preserving history.

General Comments

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How do I, as a leader, perceive the spiritual expectations of people in our community?

How can we, as a board, research and understand our community better?

How can we, as a church, build closer relationships with this lifestyle segment?

Color Key

High Priority

Medium Priority

Low Priority

Leadership Preferences

Resource: *Spiritual Leadership* by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

THE CONSTANT LEADERS		THE ORGANIC LEADERS		THE EXTREME LEADERS	
x	Caregiver		Discipler		Visionary
x	Enabler		Guru		Mentor
	CEO				Pilgrim

Birkenstocks and Beemers expect pastors to be classically trained in seminary and certified by the denomination. They may be starting out in their clergy career, or in the final years of their ministry. Pastors make worship design a high priority and is an excellent expository preacher. They are proficient in liturgy, and may be able to sing the Communion liturgy. Administration and mission are often delegated to boards and committees. Strategic decisions tend to be made by consensus, and the pastor facilitates parliamentary procedure.

Pastors emphasize the church as a “family” or “community”, and encourage strong relational bonds of mutual support. Pastors are approachable and friendly, moderate about major social issues, and non-confrontational. They are loyal to the denomination, but open to explore ideas. Pastors often model classic spiritual disciplines for meditation, and are available for personal counseling. They are casual visitors, and linger to chat with members at home or in the community. They often represent the church in community events. Pastors should be a calming, rational influences, and not become too obsessed by a single issue or too aggressive about getting instant mission results.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe your pastor now?

How might your pastor adapt to be more empathic in the future?

How can you equip, train, and/or support your pastor in any transition?

Hospitality Preferences

Resource: *Worship Ways* by Thomas Bandy and Lucinda Holmes (Abingdon Press)

TRADITIONAL		MODERN		POSTMODERN	
	The Basics	x	Multiple Choices		Take-Out
		x	Healthy Choices		

Birkenstocks and Beemers may not worship regularly, but whenever they come to church they want to be greeted by first name and warmly welcomed into the family. They value continuity and predictability from week to week. Greeters do not need special training, but they should be selected because of their extroverted friendliness. However, because of the above average number of divorced or widowed singles, be respectful and alert to individual sensitivities.

People tend to arrive early and linger after worship. Refreshments should be offered before and after worship. Keep it simple, but high quality. Serve excellent coffee and varieties of tea, with real cream and skim milk, sugar and sugar substitutes. Food can include a selection of sugary desserts, but it is best if they are homemade. Otherwise, serve healthy choices of fruit, vegetables, nuts and grains, along with fruit juices. Fellowship dinners are frequent and fun. They are usually pot luck, but may be specially prepared by a local chef on special occasions. Make sure there are lots of salad choices.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe your hospitality ministries now?

How should hospitality ministries change to be more relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What additional training do greeters, ushers, and servers need to be more empathic?

Worship Preferences

Resource: *Worship Ways* by Thomas Bandy and Lucinda Holmes (Abingdon Press)

TRADITIONAL		MODERN		POSTMODERN	
x	Care-giving Worship	x	Inspirational Worship		Mission-Connectional Worship
x	Educational Worship		Transformational Worship		Coaching Worship
	Healing Worship				

Birkenstocks and Beemers expect worship to convey a strong sense of belonging, intellectual stimulation, and inspiration for the coming week. The liturgy is structured and follows a standard denominational pattern, and it is very well done. Visitors will always comment that they “feel right at home”. Beauty and peace pervade the service. Music relies on classic hymns that are more upbeat, and there is usually a very good choir singing to organ or grand piano accompaniment. Worship usually follows the Christian Year.

The sermon tends to be shorter (about 15 minutes at most), and is based on a common lectionary. It is best if it makes a single, memorable point. Shorter sermons and a well-paced liturgy allow for more time to pass the peace, share community announcements, and pray for individuals and their families. There is also a “Moment for Mission” that educates the congregation about local or denominational outreach projects. Worship relies on excellent audio systems, but may not include video. There are intentional moments of silence for private meditation that may be facilitated by anthems or quite background music.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe your worship service(s) now?

How should you customize one or more worship services to be relevant to this segment?

What additional training do preachers, musicians, readers need to meet expectations?

Education Preferences

Resource: See, Know, and Serve by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

FORM		CONTENT		GROUPING	
x	Curricular		Biblical		Generational
	Experiential	x	Topical	x	Peer Group

Birkenstocks and Beemers often do not make Sunday school a priority, although they strongly support youth ministries. Children's classes may be combined, and the church may use a rotational system that sets a theme for the month, and then rotates children among learning centers using crafts, storytelling, music, video, etc. A printed workbook will likely be the basis of the program. It will reflect the annual Christian calendar. There may be frequent visiting children, as grandchildren visit grandparents during the year.

The optimum time for adult Sunday school participation is usually in the late fall (after the autumn colors have faded), and in the early and mid-winter (Lent). Christian education will be shaped around other priorities for travel, cruises, special community fairs and public events, and family reunions. Adult classes tend to be topical, but not necessarily around social issues. The topics are more likely related to the arts, history of religion, comparative religions, spirituality and meditation, the environment, etc. Adult Sunday school classes often rely on audio or video courses, accompanied by a study guide. Leadership is often rotated among group participants.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe children, youth, and adult education in your church now?

How would education strategies need to change to be relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What changes in leadership selection and training would make education more effective?

Small Group Preferences

Resource: See, Know, and Serve by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

LEADERSHIP		CONTENT	
x	Trained Leaders	x	Curriculum Study
	Rotated Leaders	x	Shared Affinity

Birkenstocks and Beemers favor small group experiences. Some groups may focus on Bible study, but most will organize around other kinds of books (including novels, biographies, and poetry). Many groups will be based on affinities for crafts, hobbies, and music; or enthusiasms for food, wine, and travel; or activities like hiking, jogging, or canoing. There is always an educational component, but groups are mainly about fellowship and mutual support. Groups tend to be short term and stand alone. There may not be any expectation to progress in an intentional way from one group to another. Groups are usually not part of a larger system of spiritual life.

Birkenstocks and Beemers are also interested in self-improvement groups. They participate in spiritual gifts inventories, personality typologies, meditation disciplines, and any program that deepens self-awareness. They may also participate in marriage enrichment events and singles groups. Leadership is usually rotated among members of the group. The exceptions will be groups focused on self-improvement.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How would you describe the Small Group strategy in your church now?

How would Small Group strategies need to change to be relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What changes in leadership and content would make Small Groups more effective?

Outreach Preferences

Resource: Strategic Thinking by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

	PERSONAL NEED	READINESS TO VOLUNTEER
Basic Survival		X
Health and Wellness	X	X
Quality of Life	X	X
Addiction Intervention		
Interpersonal Relationships		
Human Potential	X	X
Salvation and Human Destiny		

Birkenstocks and Beemers primarily participate in outreach through financial gifts. They may be generous donors toward moderate to liberal causes, and well-established social service agencies. Mission is often conceived as a form of education. Study groups about mission attract their interest; and educational projects raise consciousness about issues and encourage changes in public policies. They are concerned about the environment, and will support scientific research and non-aggressive advocacy agencies. They prefer outreach projects that are not too labor intensive, and are unlikely to commit to very controversial projects. They will be energetic about recycling, and will contribute to “depot” ministries that collect and distribute food, clothing, and used household goods.

They will be attracted by outreach ministries that help them uncover or develop hidden potential, or which broaden and deepen spirituality. Spiritual gifts and personality inventories; meditation practices and inter-religious dialogue; and exploration of religious art and creative expressions of spirituality may provide an interesting intersection of faith and recreation.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

What outreach categories does your church emphasize now?

What outreach categories would be more relevant to this lifestyle segment?

What outreach priorities and tactics should change for the church to bless this segment?

Facility Preferences

Resource: See, Know, and Serve by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

PROPERTY		TECHNOLOGY		SYMBOLISM	
x	Ecclesiastical	x	Modern		Classic Christendom
	Utilitarian	x	Postmodern		Contemporary Post–Christendom

Birkenstocks and Beemers tend to live in smaller, rustic, or artsy communities away from the fast pace of the city. Their expectations of church architecture are simple, but still ecclesiastical. Church buildings may be 19th century or early 20th century with classic features (steeple, main front entrance, center aisle, rows of pews, chancel, etc.), but they may be refurbished with fresh paint, modern stained glass, etc. If the buildings are new, they still tend to be classically designed, but include larger hospitality and fellowship space and upgraded kitchens. Property additions usually improve office space, and create larger fellowship space. The latter is furnished with comfortable seating and plenty of storage space, and church buildings are often opened to the community for wider use.

Offices are equipped with up-to-date computer and copy equipment. However, the sanctuary rarely includes video screens because it destroys the aesthetics and video is distracting in worship. Renovations are often done to improve the sound system and general acoustics. This segment is not ostentatious, but their church buildings (like their automobiles) convey a sense of classic prestige.

The symbolism may be a mix of classical (even ancient) Christian and more contemporary scenes from nature. Avoid anything plastic or cheap. Real plants and flowers may decorate the sanctuary. Outdoor signs are intentionally modest, and blend into the scenery. They may not be illuminated or electronic, but they are manually changed each week.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

What renovations and/or upgrades need to be made in our church facility?

What symbols of faith would be most relevant to this lifestyle segment?

If we started another site of ministry for this segment, how should we design it?

Financial Preferences

Resource: See, Know, and Serve by Thomas Bandy (Abingdon Press)

GIVING TARGET		GIVING METHOD	
x	Unified Budgets and General Funds	x	Informed Philanthropy & Pledging
	Designated Programs & Mission Projects		Lifestyle Coaching & Family Financial Planning

Birkenstocks and Beemers are good money managers, but not necessarily good fund raisers. Entertainment venues, silent auctions, fairs, and other social occasions are often good ways to raise money for special projects and outreach ministries. They tend to prefer unified budgets because they are simpler to manage, and people generally trust the local institution. Their trust for the denomination may be lower, and they may prefer to give to local mission targets rather than generic denominational mission funds. They often do not like to talk about money in church, and they expect financial giving to the church to be strictly confidential.

Some people will prefer stewardship campaigns that simply provide information and request a pledge; and others will prefer a campaign that offers more individual coaching to shape a generous lifestyle. Capital campaigns are sometimes a challenge because people in this segment are not aggressive about asking for money, and they are skeptical of professional fund raisers. They prefer to minimize debt to banks, and capital improvement projects are often underwritten by personal debentures or private (usually anonymous) donations.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

What options in giving methods and giving targets do we offer now?

How do we design our annual stewardship campaign(s) now?

How should we revise our financial strategy to be more relevant to this segment?

Communication

Resource: Mosaic E–Handbook by Experian

CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC COMMUNICATION					TRADITIONAL CHURCH COMMUNICATION						
	Direct Mail Receptive		Mobile Telephone		Online Computer	x	Newspaper		Corded Telephone	x	Verbal Announcements
	Email Receptive	x	Broadcast Cable TV	x	Internet Radio	x	Print	x	AM/FM Radio	x	Personal Visits

Birkenstocks and Beemers are open to the internet, but use it mainly for utilitarian purposes like banking, researching products they will buy from a store, and health research. They may participate in popular social media, but tend not to exchange much email. Church websites tend to be fairly static. Volunteers don't want to take a lot of time maintaining them, and they may contain little more than archived documents, past sermons, and updated calendars. However, people in this segment are starting to appreciate interactive websites more. Create an opportunity for members to post photographs directly to the church website. Photography is a popular hobby, and sharing images (usually still, but occasional video) is one way they build relationships in the church family.

Print is still a good way to communicate with them. They will carry away brochures from a church welcome center and read church newsletters (either delivered by mail or downloaded from email attachments). They tend to print documents and maintain filing cabinets, and are less apt to store things in "the Cloud". However, they dislike direct mailings and may have "No Soliciting" signs on their mailboxes.

If they are not traveling, they love to spend time at home. Therefore, they are reachable by phone (and cell phone) and will respond quickly to voice messages. Verbal announcements in worship and other gatherings may not be the best way to communicate important information, but they like such announcements anyway because it reinforces the sense of belonging and intimate community that they prize.

Note: See the list of definitions at the end of this report to explain key terminology.

Discussion Questions:

How do we communicate among church participants now?

How do we communicate beyond our church to the community now?

How should we adapt communication strategies to be more effective for this segment?

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

POTENTIAL INFLUENCE

Lifestyle Compatibility	Daily behavioral habits overlap with common activities and similar priorities
Family Group	Grouping by key demographic factors like age, income, culture, family status, etc.
Frequent Neighbors	Often live near each other with shared recreational, health, or emergency services

LEADERSHIP

Constant Leaders	Traditional clergy focused on sustaining ministries & increasing members
Organic Leaders	Innovative leaders focused on church growth, new starts & multiplying followers
Extreme Leaders	Non-Institutional leaders focused on spiritual disciplines, high accountability, and pursuing perfection
Caregiver	Focus on visitation, counseling, pastoral prayer
Enabler	Focus on facilitating meetings, lay empowerment, mediation, liturgy
CEO	Focus on staff development, administration, fund raising, expository preaching
Discipler	Focus on seeker sensitivity, adult faith formation, guidance for Christian living
Guru	Focus on religious insight, holistic personal growth, spirituality, enlightenment
Visionary	Focus on big picture, major social change, motivational speaking
Mentor	Focus on self-awareness, individual meaning and purpose, vocational clarity
Pilgrim	Focus on cross-cultural sensitivity, inter-religious dialogue, strict spiritual discipline

HOSPITALITY

The Basics	Friendly untrained greeters, basic coffee and creamer, packaged food or sugary snacks
Multiple Choices	Trained greeters, multiple serving stations, great coffee, varieties of food
Healthy Choices	Trained greeters mirroring lifestyle diversity, healthy food options, allergen alerts
Take-Out	Coffee-to-go, bagged food, exit door hospitality, text message and social media

EDUCATION

Curricular	Printed books or study guides. Passive, intellectual, classroom. Maturity measured by acquired knowledge
Experiential	Activities. More music, images, movement, interaction. Maturity measured by behavior patterns, attitudes.
Biblical	Focuses on the Old and New Testaments. Maturity means Biblical literacy
Topical	Focuses on contemporary issues. Maturity means ethical integrity and enlightened behavior
Generational	Gathers people by age or grade in separate classrooms with age-appropriate resources.
Peer Group	Gathers people sharing affinities or common interests regardless of age.

SMALL GROUPS

Rotated Leaders	Participants take turns hosting and leading the group. Requires limited expertise and training.
Designated Leaders	Single leader guides the group from start to finish. Requires significant maturity and training.
Curriculum	Focus on a book, workbook, or structured program to guide structured discussion
Affinity	Focus on shared interest, enthusiasm, or activity to inspire informal discussion.

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS (cont.)

WORSHIP

Educational	Consistent liturgy, expository preaching, focus on doctrine, ethics, and history
Inspirational	Uplifting music, motivational speaking, focus on joy, optimism, and encouragement
Transformational	Spontaneous, expectant, personal transformations, Higher Power interventions
Coaching	Informal, dialogical, topical, practical coaching on how to live better & faithfully
Caregiving	Slow, meditative, family–feel with pastoral prayer, children’s time, senior celebrations
Healing	Quiet, prayerful, expectant of physical, mental, relational healing and hope
Mission–Connectional	Unity of action/reflection, all about outreach, volunteer empowerment

OUTREACH

Survival	Basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, jobs, basic health care
Recovery	Addiction intervention, 12 step support, and counseling services
Health	Mental and physical fitness, disease prevention, rehabilitation, therapy
Quality of Life	Social wellbeing, neighborhood safety, environment, immigration, peacemaking
Human Potential	Personal/vocational fulfillment, education, career help, human rights advocacy
Interpersonal	Intimacy, sexuality, family & marriage counseling, healthy friendships
Human Destiny	Repentance, conversion, witnessing, alignment with God’s purposes

FACILITIES

Ecclesiastical	Facility must “look like a church” with traditional architecture and furnishings
Utilitarian	Facility must be “user–friendly” and multi–purpose for public use
Christendom	Indoor/outdoor symbols associated with church history or denominational identity
Contemporary	Indoor/outdoor symbols from nature, indigenous cultures, alternative spiritualities
Modern	Technology primarily enhances print and oral communication
Postmodern	Technology primarily enhances multi–sensory interaction, internet, social media

FINANCES

Unified Budgets	Stability first. Give to a single general fund to pay staff and manage overhead costs
Designated Giving	Effectiveness first. Give to specific funds or causes by personal preference
Informed Philanthropy	Informed, independent, confidential financial commitments for a tax benefit
Lifestyle Coaching	Individual & household coaching for Christian family financial management

COMMUNICATION

Direct Mail Receptive	Pay attention to mass mailings to postal addresses.
Email Receptive	Pay attention to information delivered digitally to personal email addresses.
Mobile Telephone	Regularly rely on cell phones and smart phones for calling, texting, surfing, banking etc.
Broadcast Cable TV	Regularly rely on cable television for news, advertising, and entertainment.
Online Computer	Regularly go online by personal computer to surf websites, shop, bank, and use other services.
Internet Radio	Regularly subscribe to internet services for music, sports, and topical discussions.
Newspaper	Pay attention to printed newspapers for updates about church news or local, national, global events.
Print	Pay attention to printed church newsletters, bulletin inserts, brochures, and other handouts.
Corded Telephone	Regularly use ordinary telephones to communicate from home.
AM/FM Radio	Regularly use traditional radio to listen to music, commercials, and talk.
Verbal Announcements	Always rely on verbal announcements from the pulpit about church events or items of interest.
Personal Visits	Always expect personal visits at home by a representative of the church to share information.